

Parkland Community Advisory Council

October 21, 2021

CO-PRESIDENTS

Jennifer Jones
Michelle Wahlmark

SECRETARY

Andrea Scott

ATTENDEES: Kathryn Hucaluk, Heidi Knafo, Jerry Knafo, Joshua Knafo, Kylie Knafo, Nicole Mandry, Desiree Pascal, Lisa Petrocelli, Ned Rauch Marrino, Jay Rohatgi, Melanie St. Hill, Doreen Wynn

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES: Kylie Knafo, Rishika Rohatgi

SCHOOL BOARD REPRESENTATIVE: Linda Perlman-McKenna

ADMINISTRATION: Dr. Michelle Minotti, Dr. Mark Madson

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order by Michelle Wahlmark at 7:03pm.

Prior to the foreman presentation, Dr. Mark Madson briefly introduced himself to the members of CAC. Dr. Madson, Parkland School District's new superintendent, relayed his vision for the future.

PRESENTATION:

“Post-Secondary Planning” presented by Eric Roberts.

The Post-Secondary Planning presentation was an open forum question and answer session between Mr. Eric Roberts and former PHS student panelists. The students joined us virtually.

Benjamin Dobbs, a sophomore at the University of Delaware, joined us from his semester abroad in Spain. Ben spoke about his experiences in college and how PHS prepared him for the challenges of college. He felt very lucky to have teachers who were passionate about their subjects and in turn made learning interesting and fun. He took many college tours in the fall of his junior year. He believes, if possible, to visit each school in person instead of virtually because you get a better understanding of the feel and culture of the college as you walk around its campus. Ben also said that the biggest tip he could give to students with college aspirations is to plan on structuring your time during the week, so you complete the hardest task or assignment first.

Robert (RJ) Corba, a senior Pre-Med major, joined us from Hamilton College. He is one of twelve students interviewing prospective students for the College. Because the ACT/SAT tests are now optional, he suggests taking a lot of time on your college essays. He also suggests writing about how you would be a perfect fit and asset to each specific college or university. RJ also said that budgeting time and identifying how long tasks and assignments will take are very important to successfully navigating through college.

Ashley Davis is a sophomore in the honors college at Lehigh Carbon Community College (LCCC). She accepted her offer to attend LCCC instead of Temple because of the impact of COVID. COVID forced all colleges to switch from in person to fully remote learning. Ashley felt that the cost of tuition did not justify

attending Temple in a fully remote capacity. The decision was made even easier since she was accepted into the honors program at LCCC. She is now looking ahead and will be attending Cedar Crest University majoring in nursing. Ashley explained the importance of getting involved in college. She is involved in the college board committee, meeting new students and administrators. She also relayed the importance of not stressing out in high school with taking a full course load of accelerated classes in high school.

Julianne Dee, a student in the Physician Assistant (PA) program, joined us from St. Francis University. She explained how important it is to set yourself apart from all the other applicants throughout the application and interview process for colleges. Since she only applied to colleges who had 5-year PA programs, she was really interviewing for a highly competitive graduate seat. Julianne also stressed the importance of knowing your limits and sticking to them in college. She also cautioned, there are so many opportunities available on campus it is easy to overextend yourself. It is much better to be highly involved in a smaller number of experiences.

Tyler Bartman, a freshman architecture major, joined us from Thomas Jefferson University. Tyler did not take the SAT, so he made sure to customize his essays to make sure that he stood out among the other applicants. He spoke about the importance of time management in college. He also said the key to a successful college experience is meeting new people and making connections.

All the panelists agreed that being involved in extracurriculars, especially in leadership roles, is important in high school. The involvement is not just for your resume, it is for experiencing what you are passionate about. They suggested picking two or three activities or extracurriculars and became highly involved in them. Most of the panelists said they only learned this lesson after high school and wish they learned it sooner.

Below are some other highlights and opportunities available to the students in the district:

- Currently there are many opportunities to explore colleges and learn about application processes.
- There will be a financial aid night in fall and a college night.
- Colleges will be coming to PHS, sometimes multiple in a day, to give great tips and talk to students. Underclassmen are always welcome to these experiences as well as seniors.
- There is a career speaker series available to ninth and tenth grade students. The students can choose which speakers they will listen to and learn more about career options available to them.
- The SAT/ACT's will continue to be optional at least for the near future because many times their scores do not reflect their GPA.
- It is very important to have students visit colleges throughout their time in the district. It is not necessarily just for juniors and seniors. College visits can really light a fire under a student. You never know where that aha moment will be where all the pieces fit together... size of campus, student life, decision of a major, career path and the realization of what they really want to do!
- Every Wednesday night, from 3pm to 7pm, Mr. Roberts has extended office hours for college counseling.

SCHOOL BOARD REPORT: Linda Perlman-McKenna, School Director and Board Liaison to the CAC, presented a report highlighting the topics discussed at the Board Meetings. For more details of any meeting, please view the minutes and recordings online found on the PSD website.

- The School Board met nine times since the last CAC meeting! Too many things were discussed in detail throughout the summer to be included in detail so please view the minutes on the PSD website.
- The most significant and time-consuming objective of this past summer's meetings was to work with administration to safely keep schools open to students 5 days per week in the 2021-2022 school year.

Personnel Changes- Many personnel changes have occurred since the last CAC meeting. Some of the significant changes were:

- Mr. Vignone, director of Business Administration, retired in September and Leslie Frisbie took over the position. The board was very grateful that he ensured a smooth transition.
- Dr. Minotti transitioned from the principal of SMS to the assistant superintendent and the SMS assistant principal was promoted to principal as of July 1st.

Financial Outlook-

- In June the general budget, of approximately \$201 million, was accepted.
- The tax rate will remain 15.71 mils, resulting in no tax increase. This is a testament to the great job they did planning the budget.
- The Board approved any technology items including using a grant to partially fund the replacement/replenishment of 1435 chrome books. The grant saved the district \$500k.

Upcoming Meetings: More details can be viewed on the meeting agenda that is accessible online or by replaying the recorded meetings.

- Next Board Meeting – October 26th at 7pm at the Administration Building
- There will be a Board retreat on October 30th.
- Committee meetings will occur on November 11th.
- A regular Board meeting will occur on November 16th.
- A Board reorganization meeting will be held on December 7th.

Indoor graduation at the PPL Center on June 7th was approved by the Board.

STUDENT REPORT:

- The Parkland Girls Volleyball team is competing in the EPC Girls Finals game.
- Two Parkland girl's tennis players won the District 11 doubles final match.
- Both boys' and girls' soccer are competing in the EPC championship
- The Parkland Law Club hosted all 6 judicial candidates to talk about what their career path was from high school through college, how they decided to get into law and their experiences in the field.
- The Parkland Political Science Club is competing in the Columbia Model United Nations conference in January.

OLD BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS: None

ROUNDTABLE:

- Andrea Scott inquired about the idea of applying for a grant from the Parkland Education Foundation for a trip to Philly to visit the historical sites. The 6th and 7th grade students were not able to go due to COVID restrictions when they were in 5th grade. However, since it is not a district wide trip, and each elementary school can determine where they would like to take their 5th grade class, it would not be eligible for a district wide initiative.

- The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, November 18th at 7pm at Veterans Memorial Elementary School.

MOTION TO ADJOURN: At 8:43 pm a motion to adjourn was called. Jay Rohatgi moved, with Melanie St. Hill seconding the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,
Andrea Scott